

HOBBY

Bandwagon

Vol. 5-6, No. 12-1—JAN.-FEB., 1951

15c



—C. P. Fox Photo—Courtesy of Kalmbach Publishing Co.

The above will be a familiar scene in the near future and will be welcomed by the readers of the Bandwagon.

— The Circusiana Magazine —

HOBBY

Bandwagon

122 South Main Street
Camden, Ohio

Entered as second-class matter at the
post office in Camden, Ohio, under the
act of March 3, 1879. Printed in U.S.A.

JANUARY-FEBRUARY, 1951
Vol. 5-6 No. 12-1

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15c a single copy
\$1.00 a year in U.S.A.

Advertising rates—
\$1.00 per col. inch

Permission to copy articles in this maga-
zine must be secured from both author
and publisher.

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP

Management, etc., of the Hobby-
Bandwagon, as required by an act of
Congress, August 24, 1912; Hobby-
Bandwagon, published monthly at Cam-
den, Ohio.

Owner, publisher, editor and manager,
Harry M. Simpson, Camden, Ohio.
Mortgagee: None.

HARRY M. SIMPSON
Publisher

Subscribed and sworn before me this
25th day of September, 1950.
LOUISE SIMPSON,
Notary Public.

The Editor Says



In view of the fact that Harry Simpson forgot—or was too busy to write anything for this column—I'll give a plug here to George Hamid's fine book "Circus." I'm sure that every member of CHS knows of George Hamid—or at least has heard of him. I have a copy of this new book he has written, and have found it to be very interesting.

In this book Hamid has told of the very beginning of his career as a circus performer; he has given Annie Oakley a lot of credit for his success; and he tells many little details of his business that are not to be found in any other book of this type. You will also find mentioned a number of circus folks whom you know, and when you read of how Hamid outdid Jerry Mugavin, only to be outdone himself, I feel sure that you will chuckle deeply.

The book "Circus" is available from the Gun Room Book Sellers at \$3.00 and is well worth every penny you pay for it.

—Robert C. King.

CIRCUS PHOTOS

Both old and new. Parades, tableaux, wagons, trains, horses, tents, side show, personnel. Many shows. Big, free list upon request.

ROBERT SAMS
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Initial Planning Underway For Fifth Circusiana Exhibit at Hagerstown

Planning is underway for the Fifth Great Circusiana Exhibition at Hagerstown, Maryland. The display, as in former years, will be housed in one of the largest galleries of the Washington County Museum of Fine Arts, located in the beautiful and scenic Hagerstown City Park. The museum has allotted the Two Hemisphere Bandwagon, C.H.S., sponsors of the exhibit, the entire month of June and invitations are extended now to all modelbuilders, collectors, photographers, painters, and historians throughout the U. S. and Canada to participate in this huge educational display by sending items from their collections to augment those of the Hagerstown members.

All items will be covered by all forms of insurance while at the museum and only museum attaches will handle the items as everything submitted will be presented in glass cases or wired or roped off areas. In the previous exhibits, not one single item was broken or mutilated at the museum.

The display, according to Chairman Richard Hemphill of the Circus Historical Society and a member of CMB&OA and C.F.A., encompasses more than 1,000 bits of circus lore from tiny HO scale models to huge flamboyant posters from the collection of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., and it is hoped that this year's will indeed be bigger and better than ever before. Additional information concerning the exhibit may be obtained by writing to Mr. Hemphill, 32 South Mulberry Street, Hagerstown.

The exhibit opens June 3rd and closes June 30th. Send items to:

CIRCUSIANA EXHIBIT
Washington County Museum of Fine Arts
Hagerstown, Maryland

Send items between **May 20th and June 1st.**

In previous years the exhibit has been held over by popular exhibit has been held over by popular acclaim and received widespread publicity in several states. A major metropolitan newspaper has made inquiry about the 1951 exhibit and will probably cover it. A. Morton Smith has described it in HOBBIES magazine.

The exhibit is well worth driving many miles to see; and all circus enthusiasts are invited to also take part in the Fifth Annual Picnic of CFA, CHS, CMB&OA to be held during the exhibit's run on Sunday, June 17th. The Picnic is virtually an all-day affair, so all may come early and stay late. During the afternoon, circus movies and slides are shown in one of the museum auditoriums. Members who would like to send or bring slides and/or movies please contact Mr. Hemphill.

Band Leaders of the Sparks Circus From the Early Days

Written for The Bandwagon by C. E. Duple—CHS 39

Just who the first band leader was with the John H. Sparks Circus I have never been able to learn, however in the late 1890's J. W. Chattaway was the leader. He was the composer of several marches for band published by the H. E. McMillin Co., Cleveland, Ohio, a large music firm for over 30 years. Chattaway hailed from Boston and he was with John Robinson Circus, cornettist in the band at the opening of the 1917 season, the writer being with the same circus. He left when the show went in the Eastern territory and I never heard of him after that. His galop, "There They Go," was used by many circus bands in the old days. One of his numbers was March "Broncho" (dedicated to Prof. Chas. Sparks and his trained horse Broncho. I gave a copy of this in 1916 to Jack Phillips and it was played during the concert. I recall Chas. Sparks approached later asking what that was—he having recognized the tune from the early days.

Clarence Cooper who hailed from Vandergrift, Pa., and who married Inez Sparks, was leader some years in the early 1900's, also J. S. Kritchfield was leader in 1906 and earlier. He had his own Uncle Tom's Cabin Company under canvas traveling on his own private car, a combination sleeper, diner, and baggage car touring the Middle West in 1907 and later. I saw this troupe the summer of 1908 when it appeared at Jeffersonville, Ind. Mr. Kritchfield, an old friend of the writer was on the side show door the entire time Chas. Sparks operated the Downie Bros. Circus.

Harry Turner was also a leader with the Sparks Circus and was located in Birmingham, Ala., 30 years ago cornettist at the vaudeville theatre, the writer also connected with another theater there that winter,—but was not writing historical notes then.

I received a telegram to join the Sparks Circus in Shreveport, La., at the opening of the 1911 season. The show had wintered there. The telegram arrived too late as I was in Cincinnati, having joined the John Robinson 10 Big Shows. The leader with Sparks Circus then was Ben Taylor.

Now Jack Phillips comes into the picture. He had been cornettist with Al. G. Field Minstrels, and Barnum & Bailey Circus. The 1912 season he was bandmaster of Downie & Wheeler Circus owned by Andrew Downie and Al. F. Wheeler with headquarters at Oxford, Pa. When that show ended its tour in the fall he went to the Sparks

Band Leaders of the Sparks Circus (Cont'd)

Circus and played solo cornet the few remaining weeks of 1912 season and when the show took the road in 1913 he was bandmaster, and next to Merle Evans, he held the record for being with one show for a long period. Jack Phillips remained 15 consecutive seasons as leader. There was never a more pleasant trouper than he. He was official mail man, Billboard agent, and attended to the printing of the route cards the full time he served as bandmaster. The next leader was Jack Hoyt, for the season of 1928. His wife, Ruby Hoyt, will be remembered as a performer several years with Downie Bros. Circus. Late in November 1928, the Sparks Circus was sold to the American Circus Corporation and C. L. Brown was bandmaster 1929 season. He was leader, Cole Bros. Circus 1940, and with the Sells-Floto Circus 1917-1918-1919-1920 and previous to that with Gentry Bros.

Everett Johnson of Chicago, who had a band playing fairs at one time, was there as leader 1930 season and he was the last band-leader ever to be with the old Sparks Circus as no band was used in 1931. Records were used for music the entire season and a few numbers preceding the performance were played on the air calliope by the late John DelVecho, of Buffalo, N. Y., a veteran circus and minstrel musician. Newspapers along the route in many towns made mention of the absence of the band. The customary colored band and the Jubilee Minstrels were not to be found in the side show either. That was the last year of the famous Sparks Circus. The cars and wagons that brought thrills in other days, crumbled away in the circus bone yard in Sarasota, Fla., for years exposed to the elements. All of these were burned several years ago for a measley pile of old iron I have been informed.

Fourteen years passed away, the Sparks Circus was but a memory. Another circus this time on trucks, took the road in 1946, leased to James Edgar. The leader of band with this show was Vic. Robbins, and for the 1947 season the show went out as a 10-car railroad show with James Edgar, General Manager. Henry Kyes had a good band of 10 experienced circus musicians. The writer joined in 1947 in Ontario, Canada, in charge of side show door. Show went to the far west, to the coast of British Columbia then into the state of Washington, closing the season September 7 in Tacoma.

That closing day we had a welcome visitor, Ben Taylor, a resident of Tacoma. We had never met, but we had a long talk. This being the same Ben Taylor who had sent me the telegram from Shreveport, La., in 1911.

Long live the memory of that grand old circus man Charles Sparks, whose famous Sparks Circus and his Downie Bros. Circus, under his guiding hand were, as the posters proclaimed,—A Supreme Achievement In Clean Amusement.

—C. E. Duple, Dec. 3, 1950.

The Tour of the Fisher Circus and Wild West Show

By Francis Fisher, Jackson, Michigan

The tour of the Fisher Circus and wild west show during the season of 1926 opened at Bryon, Ohio, May 1st, and after a tour which took the show through central Ohio, Indiana, the outfit returned to Michigan for a couple of County Fair dates at which time the Side Show and Big Show were placed on the midway.

At the close of the fair dates the show jumped back to Ohio, where it closed some time during the week of October.

The show was a wagon outfit, with the exception of two trucks, one of these being an International, the other a Ford model T with hard rubber tires which were very common at that time. The International hauled the cook house and the Ford hauled the wild west canopy. The horses and ponies were driven overland.

A parade was given that year, and the show carried a band wagon on which were hitched four sorrel horses. The air calliope was hauled by four white horses—all other rigs were for two ponies or horses.

The policy of the show was to feed breakfast on the lot immediately after which the wagons would leave, the cook house then loading and would arrive ahead of the wagons and dinner would usually be ready on their arrival.

The jumps would be anything from four to thirty miles. Some days the parade went down town at noon while other times it left so as to be down town around six p.m. in the evening.

The performance was given in an arena, with canopy and seats on two sides. A Delco light plant was used for lighting the show, this also was mounted in a wagon.

The performance consisted of the usual dog and pony numbers and the old time January act which always got many laughs, some wild west numbers consisting of rope spinning, horse catching, pony express. They were all well presented. The performance was closed with the riding of the bucking horse.

This show was owned and operated by my father, J. C. Fisher. The writer at that time acted as General agent, bill poster and what have you. In those days a person around a wagon or mud show made himself generally useful. The home for the show was at Jackson, Michigan, and it was from here that the start was made each spring.

Millers Dog and Pony Show

By Francis Fisher, Jackson, Michigan

Twenty-six years ago the 26th day of May, Millers Dog and Pony Circus opened their season at Eaton Rapids, Michigan. The show was owned and operated by George Miller.

The show was transported by wagons and Model T Ford trucks. The top was a 60 with a 30 ft. middle.

Charley Shram of Saginaw, Michigan, had the Band. The show carried no Side Show.

Gladis Echart and her father were the featured Aerial performers with the show.

Bart Artist, a former old time Gentry Bros. employee, broke the dogs and pony numbers during the winter of '24 and '25 in an old livery barn in the above mentioned town.

The show headed for the Ohio River Valley that season where it closed, due to ill health in the middle of August in 1925. The equipment was brought back and sold in piece meal to various people in the show business.

The writer's father, Joseph Fisher, at that time purchased some of the ponies, mules, seats and other circus equipment which was used to enlarge the Fisher Dog and Pony Circus in 1926.

Mr. Miller continued to keep his performing ponies and dogs, which he presented with the John W. Norman Indoor Circus which at that time was playing sponsorship dates in the bigger cities in Michigan.

The spring of 1927 Mr. and Mrs. George Miller joined the Tiger Bill Wild West Show, at that time being owned and operated by Emmitt Snyder and his son, Leo, who for the past number of years has been connected with Ben Davenport of Daily Bros. Circus and Obert Miller of the Kelly Miller Circus.

During the fall of 1927 George sold his remaining ponies and organized dogs to the Sullivan and Drew Circus in the east, a show that was organized by Al Wheller.

This was the closing of the George Miller Dog and Pony Circus and its finale. George spent the rest or remaining years on a farm on the outskirts of Eaton Rapids, with the firm intention that he would always organize another show. He passed away in 1947, so this marks the closing of another Old Time Wagon and Truck Show that was very familiar—known in Michigan, Indiana, and Ohio.

M. W. Organ, C.H.S. member of Wilmington, Ohio, recently gave a talk before the Clinton County Historical Society of Wilmington on "Circuses and Carnivals in Wilmington." A highlight of his talk was in regards to the Bostock Carnival that played Wilmington July 24-29, 1899. Mr. Organ has a wonderful picture collection of this event.

Kit Carson Buffalo Ranch and Wild West Show Season, 1914

The Kit Carson Buffalo Ranch and Wild West Show opened in Bessemer, Ala., in the spring of 1914, after wintering in Birmingham, Ala., with the following personnel: Tim Wiedeman, owner; Kid Bartlett, manager and superintendent of side show (formerly lived in Wichita, and owned a large chicken hatchery, but sold out a few years ago and moved to California); Jack Isenberg, second openings; Frank Millard, supt. of canvas; Brady, boss property man; Frazer, boss hostler; Walter Rhodes, pit show (featuring Peggy Poole); Pat Lynn, tickets; Eddie Haines, in charge of sheet writers; Jim Robery, jam pitchman; Colorado Cotton, Arena director (also doing a 12 horse catch in the concert).

Joe Pickett, bulldogger; Jimmy Raffert, clown; Rube Wadlet, rube clown and concert; Col. Cummings, Kit Carson, Jr.; Bert Cole, general announcer and banners; Eddie Keiter, horse thief; Prince Alex Novikoff and his Royal Russian Cossacks; The Flying Decomas, trapeze; Lou Rome Shropshire and Cohen, silver in the connection; Chester Monahan and Wm. Clark, paper in the connection; Col. Weaver, shells and perfume joint; Kid Hunt, kentucky lane; English Walker and Honest John Brown and Jerry Mugivan, joints in kid show, and Dolly Isenberg, dancer.

This show was known to be the toughest on the road. They say when a man come to hire out on the show he was asked to repeat this oath (this is hearsay): I weigh so many pounds, I will fight for the show and also steal for the show, then he was hired. Bristol, Tenn., was the site of one of the bloodiest clams in show business, there it was necessary to bring in the steel runs and use them as armor in the pullmans.

—Grady B. (Pat) Lynn.

Frank Kindler recently gave a talk on the Two Hemispheres Band Wagon and Jake Posey before the Stearns County Historical Society.

Harry L. (Cookhouse) Kelly, former circus trouper and member of C.H.S. was killed recently in an auto accident it has been reported by L. J. Sampson of Grinnell, Iowa. The Bandwagon will publish the life of Kelly in the near future.

CIRCUS SONGSTERS

By George L. Chindahl

The, Harry Hertzberg Circus Collection in the San Antonio Public Library contains copies of the below-mentioned song booklets.

DATED BOOKLETS

(Copyright dates, when given, cannot be altogether depended upon, as publishers of copyrighted booklets may have applied various covers at various times).

- 1859. Dan Rice's Original Comic and Sentimental Poetic Effusions.
- 1867 (printed date). Charley Monroe's Clown Song Book.
- 1870 (copyright date). Yankee Robinson's Beautiful Amazon Songster.
- 1870 (copyright date). The Clown's "Shoo" Songster. (Picture of New York Circus, L. B. Lent, Director, and canopy band chariot on back cover).
- 1872 (copyright date). John Foster's Favorite Clown's Songster.
- 1877 (printed date). Ben Maginley's Clown Song Book. (On back cover is printed, "P. T. Barnum's New and Greatest Show on Earth, the Colossal Wonder of the World").
- 1881 W. E. Burke's Barnum and Great London Circus Songster.
- 1882 (copyright date). Songs Sung by Tom Barry, the Great Hibernian Clown with Stone & Murray's Circus.
- 1882 Barnum and London Songster.
- 1882? Forepaugh's Songster.
- 1882 John Foster's New York Great Circus Songster.
- 1886 Tony Ashton's, Funny Old Clown.
- 1889 The Great Forepaugh Show Songster.
- 1889 Jesse L. Fusner's Old Clown Songster. (On back cover is printed, "Sam McFlinn's Big Hippolympiad, Largest Dime Show on Earth").
- 1891 Wallace and Anderson's Great World's Railroad Show, Menagerie, Museum and International Three-Ring Circus Musical Album.
- 1892 Hall & Son's Circus Songster.
- 1892 Barnum & Bailey's Circus Songster.
- 1895 Barnum & Bailey's Circus Songster.

UNDATED BOOKLETS

- Tom Barry's Van Amburgh and Reiche Bros.'s Clown Songster.
- W. W. Cole's Circus Songster. (On front cover, "Ernest, the famous clown").
- Four-page songster, "Written and sung by J. H. Kelly, with McMahon's Circus."
- A Collection of Favorite Songs by John Lowlow, the Clown and Jester. John Robinson's Great World's Exposition, Museum, Aquarium, Menagerie and Circus.
- Sam McFlinn's Great Eastern Clown's Songster.
- Johnny Patterson's Songster. Irish Clown, Rambler from Clare, with John B. Doris' Great Inter-Ocean Shows.
- Walter L. Main and Van Amburgh's Circus Songster. Walter L. Main, manager, 27 years of age.
- Jim Ward's New Comic Song Book. Ward and DeMott's Circus and Menagerie.
- John Foster's Great Clown Songster. (On back cover, "J. B. Sparrow's Great Royal Pavillion, the Largest and Most Refined Show in Existence").

ADDITIONAL CIRCUS SONGSTERS

The January, 1947, issue of Hobbies Magazine contains a very interesting article by A. Morton Smith on Circus Songsters. From this article the following additions may be made to the foregoing list:

- W. W. Cole's Equestrian Songster.
- Hagenbeck-Wallace Songster, 1915.
- A Collection of Favorite Songs as Sung by Ben Maginley, the Clown and Jester of the Great Consolidation.
- The Great Circus Royal Songster.

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LARRY TURNBULL

C.H.S. Member of England

One of our new members of the Circus Historical Society is Larry Turnbull of England. Mr. Turnbull is head electrician for the Bertram Mills Circus and is well known throughout England and United States by circus artists.

Vice-President of the Circus Collector of England, Mr. Turnbull has one of the most complete collections in England. Fred Leonard who visited the Bertram Mills Circus says, "he is one swell guy."

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